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ABSTRACT

This report looks at the specific steps the National Education Association (NEA) members feel must be taken to ensure that there will be an excellent teacher for every student in every classroom in America. The beginning of the NEA in 1857 and some of the milestones it has achieved are described. A profile of today's teachers is given. The NEA Agenda for the Teaching Profession is introduced, and specific proposals are discussed: (1) standards for teacher preparation; (2) standards boards at the state and national level to enable professional self-governance by teachers; (3) development and use of effective evaluation systems for teachers coupled with opportunities for professional growth; (4) adequate compensation of teachers; and (5) participatory decision-making in schools. References for more information on the NEA agenda are offered. (MT)

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TEACHERS *for Tomorrow*

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Introduction

For the nearly 1.9 million teachers, higher education faculty, and education support personnel who belong to the National Education Association, there is no task more important and no challenge more formidable than guaranteeing every American student an excellent education.

This ambitious goal, I believe, is today shared by more Americans than ever before. Over recent years, a consensus has emerged across our entire nation, a consensus that education is the key to our nation's future.

Thanks to this growing consensus, we now have an historic opportunity. A system of public education that unleashes the full intellectual potential of every child is now within reach. And none too soon. We face a future that will stretch our nation to the limit and test the will of our people. Our public schools need to be more demanding, more sensitive, *and more boldly innovative* than ever before.

What kind of future might unbridled innovation bring into view?

Imagine for a moment that our schools were no longer bound by the "two-by-four-by-six" model of education—that teachers and students alike were freed from the stale standard that traps them between the two covers of a textbook, the four walls of a classroom, and the six periods of the school day.

Imagine schools where all teachers were the product of teacher preparation programs so rigorous, so thorough, so demanding that every student could be guaranteed a quality education.

Imagine an alliance for educational progress among classroom teachers, college faculty, parents, the business community, civic organizations, and citizens of every stripe.

Are all these visions unrealistic? I don't think so. In fact, I believe these visions can become our educational future—if we start creating that future today.

Will we prove adequate to the challenge? A complex variety of factors will determine the answer to that question. But one thing is certain: Excellence in education begins with excellence in teaching.

This publication is a guide to the educational future that is indeed possible, a look at the specific steps NEA members feel must be taken to ensure an excellent teacher for every student in every classroom in our nation.

Excellence never comes easy. And excellence on a national scale never comes at all without the concentrated and cooperative effort of all our citizens. I invite you to be part of that effort. Together, we can make a difference.

Mary H. Futrell

Mary Hatwood Futrell
President,
National Education Association

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Excellence in Every Classroom

The NEA Agenda for the Teaching Profession

Excellence in education demands excellence in teaching.

Assume that every other element within the learning environment is first-rate—that textbooks are substantive, resources plentiful, administrative support competent, the curriculum research-based and finely honed, class size appropriate.

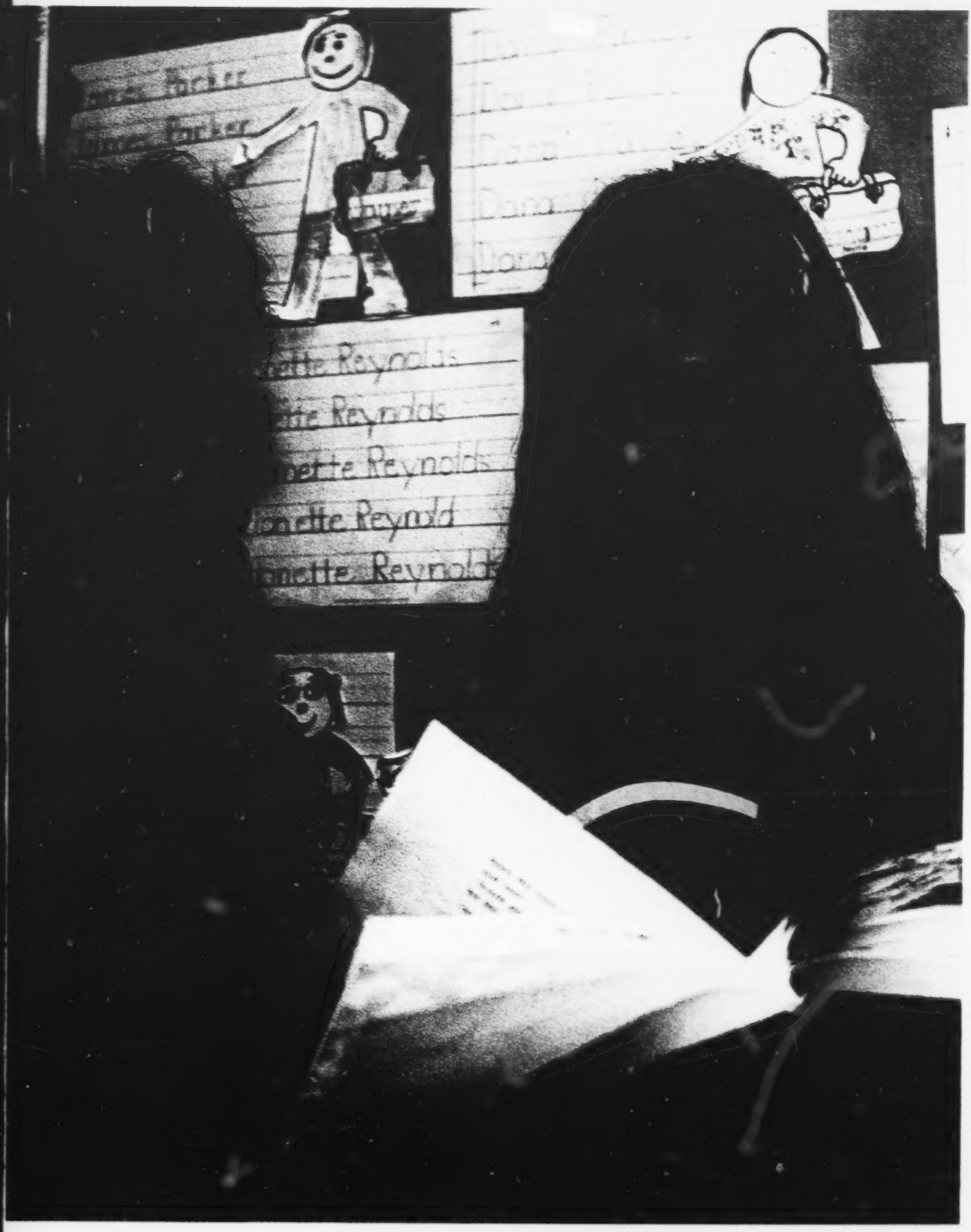
That's a portrait of a school poised to deliver excellence. *Almost.*

Missing from the picture is a critical component—the professionally prepared, conscientious, caring person who ignites within students the determination to take full advantage of learning opportunities, who awakens and stimulates student potential. Take this person away—take away the qualified teacher—and the learning environment becomes lifeless and sterile.

Educational excellence demands teachers who are catalysts, teachers who energize the learning environment and bring texts to life. Educational excellence demands teachers who can work with administrators inside the school setting to develop policies that facilitate learning—and educational excellence also demands teachers who can reach outside the school to create a cooperative alliance among teachers, parents, and other members of the local community.

NEA is working today to ensure that tomorrow's schools can count on having the excellent teachers America needs. NEA's goal is simple: a teaching profession in which every practioner is eminently qualified, never minimally competent.

Can this goal be achieved? Down through the years, the members of NEA have successfully advocated for enormous improvements in the teaching profession—and in education. Their work remains incomplete. Their commitment to excellence remains as strong as ever. And their perseverence will not wane.



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Teachers Yesterday

NEA Builds a Profession

Pennsylvania, 1857: Two-thirds of all teachers are under age 25. Qualifications necessary to teach: completion of elementary school. Average years of teaching experience barely tops three years. Average length of school year: five months, 13 days. Average salary: $24 per month for males, $16.60 for females.

Pennsylvania represented the norm in American education. And it was in Pennsylvania, on August 26, 1857, that 43 classroom teachers and higher education faculty from 10 different states assembled to create the organization that was to become the National Education Association. The letter of invitation, drafted by Thomas W. Valentine, a grammar school teacher from Brooklyn, called upon teachers to join a united effort to "promote the general welfare of our country" by advancing the dignity, respectability, and usefulness of teaching.

The theme that dominated the 1857 meeting was voiced by Massachusetts teacher William Russell. Teaching, he insisted, must be a profession, not a vocation. If standards are to rise, if education is to serve the needs of a democratic society, Russell stated, teachers themselves must establish and enforce qualifications for admission to the profession. To teachers should belong the authority to determine the standards aspiring teachers must meet.

With that first meeting in Philadelphia, teachers had begun the long, slow, often arduous, and always challenging process of building a profession.

Within 13 years, the NEA represented teachers from every state in the union. Teachers had done for themselves what no friend, sponsor, or supporter had been able to do for them. They had established themselves as a progressive force within the life of the republic.

By 1980, more than 12 decades after NEA began, 99.6 percent of all public school teachers in the United States held a bachelor's degree—and nearly half held at least one or more advanced degrees. Teaching had grown as a profession, and the National Education Association had both generated and accelerated that growth.

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NEA and Teaching: Over a Century of Milestones

1857. Forty-three educators form the organization that is to become the National Education Association and begin work "to elevate the character and advance the interests of the profession of teaching and to promote the cause of popular education in the United States."

1894. The landmark report of the NEA Committee of Ten on Secondary Education outlines the first comprehensive college preparation curriculum for high schools.

1903. The NEA National Committee on Salaries, Tenure, and Pensions focuses national attention on the need to improve teacher compensation by publishing the first detailed examination of teacher salaries and welfare.

1918. The NEA releases seven "Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education," a document that immediately becomes the preeminent statement on the objectives of public education.

1926. The first joint committee of NEA and the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools begins working to ensure excellence in education for every child.

1929. NEA promulgates the first official Code of Ethics for the Teaching Profession.

1930. The NEA and the Superintendents Association jointly create the Commission on the Emergency in Education, which works to save public schools from the economic devastation wrought by the Depression.

1946. The NEA National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards defines teaching and teacher-training standards that aim to promote the professionalism of teaching.

1954. NEA joins with the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education to found the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, America's first coordinated effort to measure teacher-training institutions against demanding national standards.

1965. NEA action helps secure passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the first major federal commitment to provide America's classrooms the fiscal resources teachers need to enhance student achievement.

1975. Congress passes the NEA-backed Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

1979. Congress establishes a cabinet-level Department of Education, an NEA goal for over a century.

1986. The NEA-created National Foundation for the Improvement of Education launches Operation Rescue to fund dropout prevention programs designed and developed by local school faculties.

Teachers Today

Better prepared than ever... challenged as never before

Today's teachers represent the best educated corps of teachers in the nation's history. And they have welcomed a challenge that no other nation in the world has dared to accept: the challenge of educating *every* child—regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, economic status, or handicapping condition.

For all these children, today's teachers are working to make good the promise of democracy. And they are working to prepare young people for a world of unrelenting change and unforeseen challenges.

Today's teachers understand that, on the average, the students now in school will change careers five to seven times during their working lives. These students need to become mentally agile and intellectually adventurous. Above all, these students need to *learn to be learners.*

Shifting demographics magnify this challenge. New waves of immigration into the United States have brought into the schools young people unfamiliar with the language and customs of their new country. The traditions and values these students bring with them will both enrich American life and strain the capacity of schools to give each child a meaningful education.

By the turn of the century, minorities will constitute one-third of the student population in the United States. This expanding minority population will be disproportionately disadvantaged. But the burden of

Profile of a Profession

Teachers with Bachelor's Degrees
99.7 percent

Teachers with One or More Advanced Degrees
50.7 percent

Teachers Engaged in Post-Graduate Work
56.1 percent

Classroom Experience of Average Teacher
11 years

poverty is not—and will not be—confined to the ghettos and barrios that scar the American landscape. In 1986, more than one-fifth of *all* American youngsters were poor—an increase of 33 percent since 1979. Millions of students must face this burden without the traditional family structure and tightly knit communities that sustained earlier generations of young people.

Other factors further complicate the mission of America's schools. Classrooms now include some 2.4 ***million*** young people ***disconnected*** from American society—by drug abuse, child abuse, depression, and pregnancy. Since 1960, substance abuse has increased 60 fold among young people. During the same period, teenage suicide has risen more than 150 percent, and teen-age pregnancy has increased by more than 70 percent.

This complex pattern of social change creates new challenges for today's teachers. These challenges will not disappear. More likely they will intensify—and change in ways that cannot be predicted. Will tomorrow's teachers have what it takes to to meet the responsibilities these challenges will generate?

Time on Instruction-Related Activities
49 hours per week

Class Size for Average Teacher
24 (elementary)
25 (secondary)

Age of Average Teacher
41

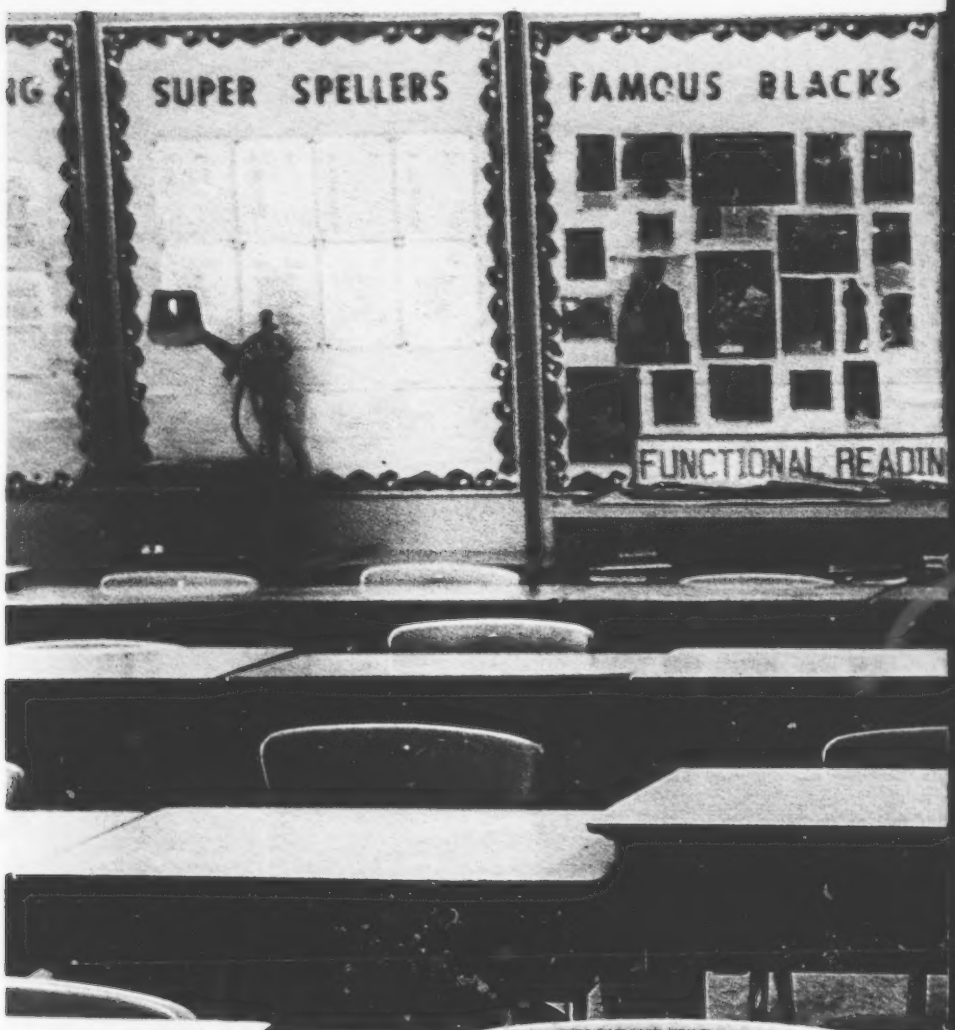
Minorities as percent of all teachers
Black — 6.9
Chicano-Hispano — 1.9
Asian/Pacific Islander — .9
American Indian/Alaska Native — .6

Average Annual Teacher Salary
$26,704

Teachers with NEA Membership
76.5 percent

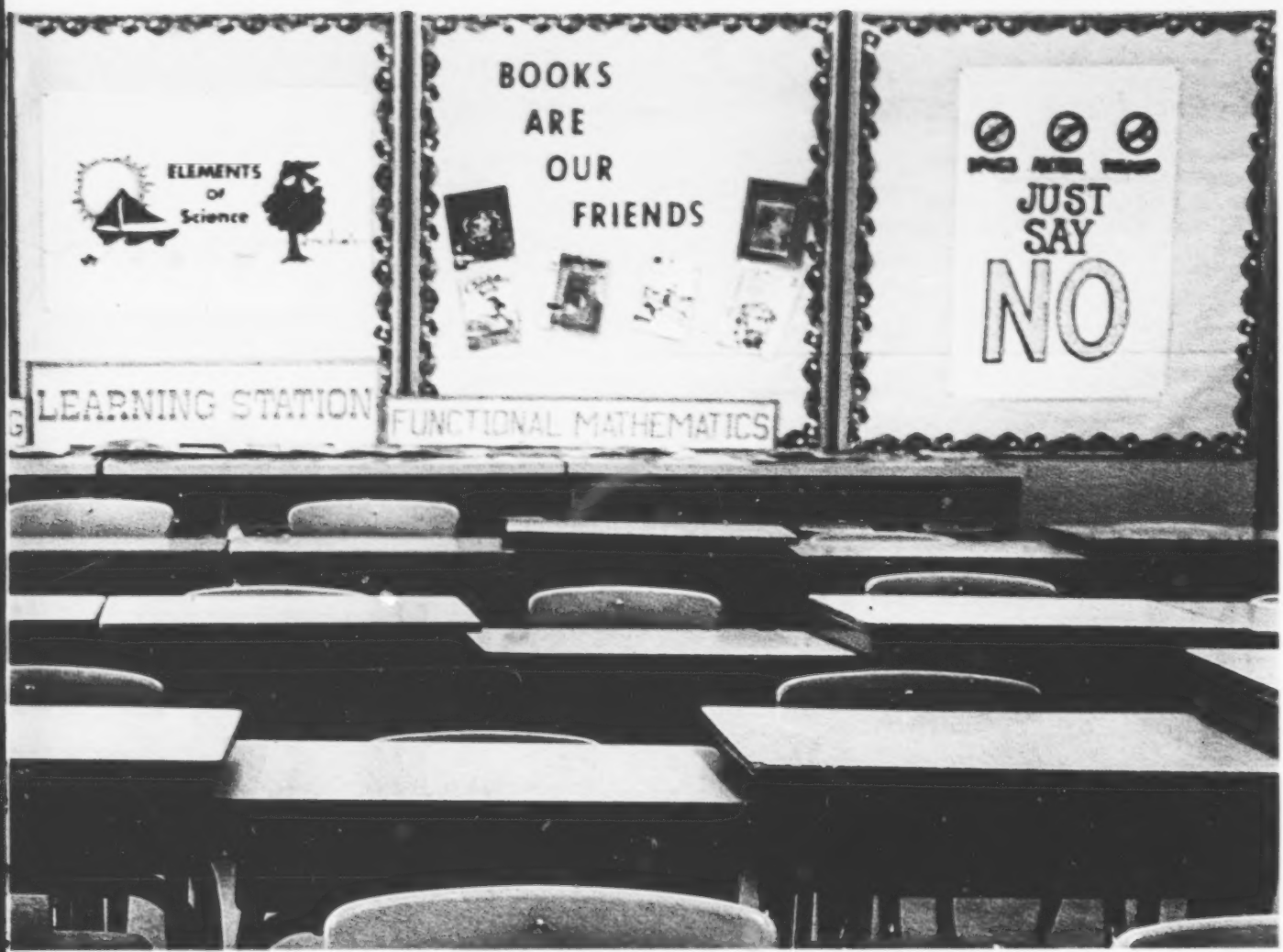
Teachers Tomorrow

Is excellence in every classroom too much to expect?



The United States today faces a serious and significant teacher shortage. That reality is reflected in one startling fact: nearly all states allow their school districts to hire as teachers men and women who have never been professionally prepared to teach, individuals who have never demonstrated their ability to meet established quality standards. An estimated 200,000 classroom teachers—close to 10 percent of the teaching workforce—hold "emergency" teaching certificates.

Individuals who lack professional preparation are ill-equipped to teach. The untrained, however well-intentioned, lack the skills necessary to effectively meet the intellectual and emotional needs of young people, especially those who most need help—the unmotivated, the learning disabled, the disillusioned gifted student. It takes a professionally prepared teacher to detect the learning disability that frustrates a child's progress or to identify a child's special talent that lies dormant and may need only the right encouragement to blossom.



NEA has long maintained that educational excellence demands a fully prepared, fully qualified teacher—*for every student, in every classroom*. Attaining this goal requires systematic cooperation among K-12 teachers, higher education faculty, and education researchers—and a renewed commitment from school boards and other agencies to enforce without exception policies that mandate the hiring of only fully trained teachers.

If policymakers work now to forge strategies that promote the ideal of equity *and* insist on the high standards that forward the cause of instructional excellence, then the day will arrive when *every* child has access to an education that serves as preparation for productive citizenship.

To help reach that day, NEA has developed an *agenda* for restructuring every major aspect of the teaching profession, an agenda outlined in the pages that follow.

The NEA Agenda for the Teaching Profession

Preparation

Forty percent of the men and women teaching in 1987 will retire by the turn of the century. The teachers who replace them must be rigorously prepared—and prepared in new and innovative ways—if students are to be readied for the demands of a changing society and a changing world.

Throughout its history, NEA has insisted on standards for teacher preparation that teachers themselves feel are basic to teaching success: rigorous admission and graduation requirements, intellectually stimulating and academically challenging coursework, and substantial opportunities for experience in classrooms and schools *before* graduation. These basic criteria should guide all efforts to strengthen the preparation for tomorrow's teachers.

The teachers of tomorrow will have to be able to adapt instruction to the unique needs of students from widely varying cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. To effectively reach all these different students, teachers will need extensive experience in a wide variety of school settings. That experience should begin with classroom observation during a prospective teacher's very first professional course, continue throughout the entire teacher education program, and culminate in a supervised practicum.

In the schools of the future, teachers will also need to know how and when new technology can genuinely enhance learning. A high level of technological literacy will be a prerequisite for effective practice in the schools of tomorrow.

Students who apply to enter the professional programs that will prepare teachers for the century ahead should be required to demonstrate solid evidence of academic ability. Prospective teachers should be expected to master a broad liberal arts curriculum—as well as both the specific subject they intend to teach *and* the professional knowledge basic to understanding how children learn. Teacher education programs should verify how well prospective teachers have mastered this content through rigorous examinations and other assessment procedures.

Teacher education institutions, for their part, should be expected to demonstrate their own professional rigor. Only graduates from schools of education that meet the standards established by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) should be eligible for licensure as teachers. NCATE offers the only national quality control mechanism for teacher education programs.

Teachers who have successfully completed an NCATE-accredited program will have completed only the first leg of their professional preparation. New teachers, during their initial year in the classroom (the intern year), should receive professional guidance from experienced teachers who have been prepared to help acclimate and assist beginning practioners.

The entire teacher preparation process should endeavor to instill in all new teachers the one conviction most essential to teaching success: *all* students are educable. Any assessment of aspiring teachers must emphasize that good teachers *believe in students*—and possess the hard-to-quantify expertise that makes students believe in themselves.

Shaping teacher education programs that meet these standards of excellence will require an ongoing partnership between teacher educators and practicing classroom teachers.

But also needed is an even broader partnership between educators and public officials. Strong systems of teacher preparation can only be maintained if public officials insist that schools provide every classroom a fully prepared teacher. Rigorous standards at the teacher-training level will do little good if public officials allow unqualified individuals to teach for political or financial reasons.

Action Needed

Local

Hire as teachers only those individuals who are fully trained, certified, and licensed. Assign teachers to only those subjects they have been licensed to teach.

State

Enact and enforce regulations that prohibit the hiring of underprepared teachers and end the granting of "emergency certificates."

National

Continue efforts to upgrade and strengthen the standards for teacher preparation set forth by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Sustain these standards in the face of any and all attempts to dilute them.

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The NEA Agenda for the Teaching Profession

Regulation

Professional self-governance is as essential to teaching as it is to any other recognized profession. Teachers—no less than doctors, lawyers, and architects—need to be able to regulate their own profession in order to assure the public of competent practice.

For teaching to become a self-governing profession, teachers would have to play an active role in establishing and enforcing standards for the preparation of teachers, for entry into the teaching profession, and for professional practice.

This active role can and should be institutionalized through standards boards at both the state and national levels. These standards boards should unite teachers, teacher educators, and public representatives in a joint effort to make teaching an ever more demanding and accomplished profession. To ensure teachers the ability to govern their profession, teachers should comprise the majority of these standards boards.

The new National Board for Professional Teaching Standards—a non-governmental body developed by foundation, civic, higher education, and teacher leaders working in concert—has been structured to recognize the importance of self-governance to the future of the teaching profession. The new board, the first of its kind for the teaching profession, will be guided in its decisions by a teacher majority.

As a non-governmental body, however, the new national board has no legal power to license teachers or set standards for entry into the profession. That power resides at the state level. For this reason, NEA has long advocated state-by-state regulation of the teaching profession by autonomous professional standards and practices boards composed of teacher majorities. These boards would license teachers to practice, recognize teachers' professional certificates, and approve the content of teacher preparation programs.

NEA members are now working to establish such boards in states across the nation. Several states have already established standards boards that enable teachers to more effectively govern and improve their profession. In these and other states, teachers are insisting that licenses to teach only be granted to those individuals who have completed a supervised teaching practicum, graduated from an accredited teacher preparation program, and passed examinations and other assessment procedures administered or recognized by state standards boards.

Action Needed

Local

Enforce—with no exceptions—policies that prohibit the hiring of individuals who have not demonstrated their competence to teach by meeting state licensure standards. Prohibit the assignment of teachers to courses they have not been prepared and licensed to teach.

State

Establish autonomous state boards of professional standards and practices that are composed of teacher majorities.

National

Develop, through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, innovative assessment instruments that can fairly and appropriately measure teacher skill and knowledge.

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The NEA Agenda for the Teaching Profession

Evaluation

As professionals, teachers have an ongoing responsibility to keep up-to-date in their teaching specialties and to sharpen and improve their pedagogical skills. And to help meet this responsibility, teachers need expert feedback on their performance.

All teachers, NEA believes, ought to be formally evaluated on a regular basis. Unfortunately, in far too many school districts across the country, evaluations are nonexistent, hastily conducted, or performed by personnel who haven't been professionally trained in effective evaluation practice.

As a result, few evaluation systems now in place genuinely help improve instruction. Most evaluation systems neither identify and reinforce teacher strengths nor pinpoint and remedy deficiencies.

Effective evaluation systems can be put in place. But such systems cannot be imposed on schools by outside authorities. To be effective, evaluation systems must be jointly designed, at the local level, by administrators, teachers, and school board members. Systems so designed won't merely *measure* competence—they will *promote* it.

Promoting effectiveness through evaluation needs to be considered a career-long process. This process should begin with the rigorous assessment of prospective teachers by state professional standards boards. It should continue with support for beginning teachers from experienced colleagues through a system of collegial assistance designed to help those who are new to the profession.

This collegial—or peer—assistance shouldn't end once teachers are into their careers. Systems of collegial assistance can also help experienced teachers improve their skills and meet their needs for professional growth and development.

Teacher on-the-job performance, meanwhile, should be evaluated regularly by trained evaluators for making decisions about teacher job status—decisions, for instance, about tenure and termination.

In all cases, evaluation should be coupled with opportunities for professional development. No teacher is perfect, and even a teacher who receives a glowing evaluation ought to be alerted to areas where improvement is possible. Similarly, an individual who receives a poor evaluation should be given the encouragement and resources needed to improve.

In some cases, unfortunately, improvement may not take place, even if a fair and appropriate evaluation system is in place. A formal reevaluation by a trained evaluator may document continuing incompetence. If an individual should remain so deficient, even after receiving help, that individual's employment as a teacher should be terminated through a process that fully respects due process rights.

But effective learning demands more than individual teacher evaluation. Learning, after all, takes place in a school environment, and that overall environment may either hinder or facilitate efforts to teach. Schools need to be evaluated as learning environments because the way a school is organized and supported can decisively affect teacher performance — ***and*** student achievement. Schools that succeed, in short, are the schools that guarantee teachers the materials, the space, the flexibility, and the time all teachers need to make learning come alive for each and every student.

Action Needed

Local

Develop evaluation systems that provide teachers with comprehensive, regular, and meaningful feedback on their professional performance.

State

Facilitate assessment at the local level by providing the funding and the time that will enable administrative personnel to acquire expertise in effective evaluation practice.

National

Support research that promotes effective and fair evaluation and identifies the most promising professional development strategies for helping teachers improve and refine their instructional skills.

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The NEA Agenda for the Teaching Profession

Compensation

This year, as in years past, thousands of teachers will leave their classrooms—and never return.

Researchers now tell us that more than half of all teachers stay in the profession no longer than five years. And as many as *20 percent* leave at the end of their first year.

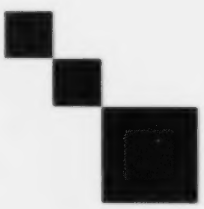
A definitive 1986 study commissioned by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company cites a number of factors that drive men and women out of the profession. Topping the list: inadequate compensation.

In 1987, the average teacher salary topped $26,000 for the first time. At this average—which represents the median income among all teachers, not just beginners—teachers actually have less real buying power than they enjoyed a decade ago.

Low levels of compensation adversely affect the quality of education in many different ways. Low salaries discourage young men and women from entering the teaching profession—and help create shortages of trained teachers. Local school districts too often attempt to "solve" these shortages by hiring individuals unprepared to teach.

Low salaries also have an adverse educational impact on the work of current teachers. To support their families, many teachers are forced to take second, non-teaching jobs on evenings and weekends. These second jobs drain teacher time and energy for instructional planning and limit opportunities to pursue further professional education. In the end, the ultimate victims of low teacher compensation are students.

The problems created by inadequate compensation will not be solved by short-term palliatives. It is time for a permanent fix—for a commitment to make teaching an attractive, rewarding, life-long *professional* option in every state and every school district.



Action Needed

Local

Ensure that teacher compensation is commensurate with the compensation of other professions requiring comparable skill and preparation.

State

Increase funding assistance to local school districts. Develop and implement strategies to ensure equity among districts.

National

Provide leadership and resources to implement the 1983 recommendation of *A Nation at Risk*, the landmark report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education: "Salaries for the teaching profession should be increased and should be professionally competitive."

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The NEA Agenda for the Teaching Profession

Participation

Effective organizations, contemporary management research has noted, are organizations that actively involve employees in decision-making. Employees whose opinions are sought and welcomed contribute valuable information to the decision-making process.

In schools, of course, participatory decision-making is essential. Teachers are constantly interacting with students and, as a result, know firsthand what students need to succeed. No decision that affects students ought to be made without the active and meaningful involvement of teachers.

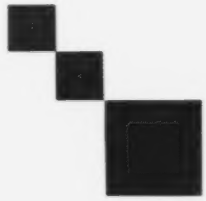
Yet, in far too many schools, classroom teachers have little say in the daily decisions fundamental to the successful practice of their profession. A 1986 national NEA survey, for instance, found that 61 percent of America's teachers seldom, never, or only occasionally have the opportunity to participate in school decisions on grading policies and student discipline codes. Even more teachers—73 percent—are not consulted on decisions about how schools plan the use of their facilities.

This isolation of teachers undermines the collegiality so crucial to effective schools. Education is not an individual act performed by individual teachers. Education is a collective faculty reponsibility, and it works best when schools create working environments that encourage teachers to interact and share.

To become more effective environments for learning, schools need to seek, not ignore, the information and professional judgment teachers can offer. NEA, through a variety of initiatives, is now working to develop school-based decision-making models that grant school faculties a greater voice in the decisions that affect learning. The NEA Mastery in Learning Project, for instance, is enabling over two dozen school building faculties to explore and develop innovative approaches to reorganizing learning at the local level.

Meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body demands ensuring that decisions that affect students' lives are made by people at the front lines of education.

These people are not in school district central offices or state capitols or the U.S. Department of Education. They are in the nation's classrooms. They are teachers.



Action Needed

Local

Establish the school building as the fundamental unit of education renewal, a step that would help teachers become better involved in all matters that affect the quality of instruction.

State

Review existing educational regulations and rework those that limit the ability of teachers to exercise the judgment essential to individualizing instruction according to student needs.

National

Provide leadership and resources to faciliate pilot decision-making projects by faculty at the school building level.

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To Learn More

The NEA agenda for the teaching profession is spelled out in more detail in a wide variety of Association publications and reports.

Below, a brief list of recent materials that can help you understand the direction in which NEA believes the teaching profession needs to be moving.

An Open Letter to America on Schools, Students, and Tomorrow. Published in 1984, this report offers a vision of education to guide America into the 21st century.

Excellence in Our Schools: Teacher Education, An Action Plan. This 1982 document, revised in 1986, identifies standards for effective teacher education programs.

Establishing and Maintaining Standards for the Governance of the Teaching Profession. This 1987 report, prepared by the NEA Instruction and Professional Development Committee, presents a professional self-governance model to guide NEA and affiliate activities.

An Assessment Continuum for the Teaching Profession. Developed in 1986 by the NEA Special Committee on Competency Testing, this guide outlines a career-long assessment process designed to facilitate the professional development of teachers.

Ventures in Good Schooling. This 1986 report, a joint project of NEA and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, notes the principles that can foster educational renewal at the secondary school building level.

The Conditions and Resources of Teaching. Published in 1986, this report documents the impact of school organization and management on instructional effectiveness.

The NEA Position Statement on Professional Growth and Development. Adopted by the NEA Board of Directors in 1986, this document describes how teachers can help teachers refine their professional performance and lists the essential elements of effective performance evaluation programs.

Higher Education Reform. Published in 1987, this collection of position papers explains the NEA perspective on the key issues facing America's colleges and universities.

For more information on these and other papers, contact NEA Instruction and Professional Development, 1201 16th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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This report has been developed under the auspices of the NEA Standing Committee on Instruction and Professional Development, chaired by Nancy Jewell, in response to a recommendation of the special NEA Higher Education Advisory Committee, chaired by James Davenport.

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